

in order to teach and tutor our students in our language and thus cannot keep academic staff from being forced to hold their meetings in English. This development is also a threat to Norwegian as an academic language.

CONCLUSION

This case shows how a less extensive European language, like Norwegian, is threatened as an academic language. Discouraging Norwegian academics from publishing in the national language will deteriorate academic Norwegian and prevent the further development of vocabulary. Our situation corresponds to the struggle African academics face in discussing academic matters in African languages, given the absence of academic concepts in their languages. All languages develop through use; through disuse they stagnate and fail to develop. The Norwegian case also reveals the threat to Norwegian publishing houses. The lack of weight given journals or chapters of books published in developing countries discourages Norwegian academics from using such publication channels. The absence of a bonus for publishing in non-refereed journals or newspapers also discourages Norwegian academics from such actions. These effects represent a threat to democracy and to the enlightenment of the public.

A discussion about the anglicization of European universities is under way in many European countries and is currently lively in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Norwegian academics seem more prepared to defend their national language as an academic language than are colleagues in some other European countries. A petition, "To the defense of Norwegian as a language of research," signed May 5, 2006, by 223 well-known Norwegian professors in the humanities and social sciences was published in the country's largest newspaper, *Aftenposten*. The petition referred to the official statement from the University of Oslo declaring that universities have a fundamental responsibility to preserve and develop Norwegian as an academic language. The statement launched the principle that no connection should exist between financial reward and the language of publication. The petition supported this principle and argued that it had to be established as a norm for the whole university and college sector. Professors who signed the petition challenged the academia of Norway to rethink the reward system that had been formed. The social sciences and humanities need provisions that do not discriminate against Norwegian. The petition has, however, as yet (April 2007) had no effect. The reward system continues.

The engagement of many Norwegian academics in defending Norwegian as an academic language contrasts with the attitude of many Dutch academics. In 1989, the minister of education in the Netherlands proposed, with overwhelming support from the academic community, that English should be the sole medium of instruction in all Dutch universities. The proposal met with harsh criticism when it was presented in Parliament, however. Parliament insisted on regulating the language issue because it did not trust the minister and the

academics. Parliament thus passed an amendment to the university law stating that no courses can be offered in another language if it is not also offered in Dutch. This action was seen as a retreat for professors who wanted more English-language instruction in Dutch higher education. Nevertheless, the expansion of master's courses taught in English has continued in Dutch higher education. The threat to European languages as academic languages posed by the increased anglicization of academia needs to be watched given the challenge to the academic strength of some European languages.

Author's note: In an article to be published in the *International Review of Education* (no. 6, 2007), I have gone deeper into these issues. ■

Student Dissent and Politics at the University of São Paulo

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On May 3, 2007, a group of students took over the rector's office at the University of São Paulo (USP). The group claims to represent the university's 80,000 students and does have the support of the unions of the university's administrative personnel, the teachers union, and some professors.

UNIVERSIDADE DE SÃO PAULO

USP is a state institution, supported by the state of São Paulo and one of the most important in Latin America. One-third of its students are in master's and PhD programs. There are 15,000 administrative employees and about 5,000 academics, most of them with a doctoral degree. In 2004, the university granted 2,100 PhDs, 3,300 MAs, and 5,500 professional degrees in all fields of knowledge at 68 units, on the main campus in the city of São Paulo and on campuses in other cities in the state.

The university receives 5 percent of the state of São Paulo's tax revenues, which amounted last year to about 2.2 billion reais (US\$1.1 billion). Within its budget, the university is free to use the funds as it sees fit and can also obtain revenues from other sources. To enter the university, students need to pass an exam that can be extremely competitive in fields like medicine, engineering, or law. There is no tuition. Most doctoral students are able to get fellowships as stipends. Professors at USP are the major recipients of research grants from the Brazilian

National Research Council and São Paulo's Science Support Agency.

THE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA

The main justification for the occupation of the USP rector's office was to protest the decree of the newly elected state governor, José Serra, requiring that the three state universities (USP, the University of Campinas, and the State University of São Paulo)—which together receive about 10 percent of state revenues—should post their routine financial transactions in a transparent state system open for inspection on the Internet. The students argue that as an autonomous institution the university should not make its accounts transparent. This decree followed the nomination of a state secretary for higher education and, given the autonomy of the universities, was feared as an attempt to bring them under the governor's control. Previously the universities were nominally under the secretary for science and technology, which had, however, other functions and did not interfere in their activities.

The students declared that the decree was an attack against university autonomy, despite reassurance from the state government and declaration by the university authorities that this was not the case. The students demanded that the governor should revoke the decree and presented a long list of other demands—from full participation of students in all university decision bodies to the construction of new buildings for student residence and the opening of restaurants with some subsidized meals. They also have been demanding that the state should increase the percentage of its tax revenues it gives to the universities.

The agenda of this movement is very clear. Most of the student activists and their supporters belong to small extreme left-

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wing fringe groups that dominate the unions and associations, given the general passivity and disinterest of the rest of the community. The students oppose what they define as a “neoliberal” hidden agenda of privatizing the university. By *privatization* the students mean any policy of the university or its departments to establish links with industry or to generate additional revenues by—God forbid!—charging tuition.

Several departments—particularly in the fields of engineering, agricultural research, economics, and business administration—have developed strong links with private and public external clients and generate resources through research, technical assistance, and extension courses. However, over the last few years, in response to negative pressures from the unions,

the rector's office has introduced several limitations and restrictions on these activities. Yet these efforts to appease the unions failed to stop the occupation of the rector's office. The rector is now caught between the political demands of the militants and the growing annoyance of most academics and students with this interruption of their work. Public opinion, which often looks at the students with sympathy, seems to be turning against them. The rector has obtained a court order requiring the students to vacate the building and could legally ask the police to dislodge them by force, but neither she nor the state governor wants to risk a physical confrontation.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SÃO PAULO

It should be noted that the state's current higher education sector represents the context of the various perspectives. In the state of São Paulo, 85 percent of the enrollments in higher education are in private institutions. There has been an ongoing demand from different sectors to increase the size and coverage of the state system. The already high cost of the state system involves the assumption that all academics are full-time researchers, which is not generally true, and the impossibility of charging tuition. Moreover, increasing the 10 percent tax base that goes to public higher education would be difficult to justify, given the pressing needs of basic education, health, security, and other social requirements.

Recently persons linked to the higher education sector have sought to plan a project for the expansion of higher education in the state similar in form to the California state system. The USP and the University of Campinas would follow the role of the University of California, the State University of São Paulo playing the role of the State University system, and expanding the Paula Souza vocational schools into a network similar to the community colleges (in partnership with municipalities and the private sector). However, this plan is not likely to be endorsed by the current state government. The prevailing commitment is to change the USP from a high-quality, internationally minded research university into a mass-oriented, highly subsidized, local and politically dominated institution.

THE CONFLICT'S IMPACT

Eventually, the students will abandon the rector's office. Already, most university departments are working normally, although the unions plan to use the crisis as an opportunity to strike for higher salaries. The key result of this episode will likely be a stalemate—a worrisome outcome. On May 31, the state government revised the decree, explicitly stating that it will not limit the autonomy of the universities. But the students and unions will not obtain most of their demands—besides some minor concessions, like weekend buses and subsidized restaurants. However, the university authorities as well as the state government will fear implementing policies to make universities use their resources more efficiently, to create strong links with the productive sector, and to grant more autonomy to the departments and institutes for raising addi-

tional resources. The conflicts will also thwart the proposals to create a more differentiated, California-like system. Needless to say, charging tuition for high-income students in public universities will not be raised. This issue is forbidden in the Brazilian constitution. No politician in Brazil has dared to publicly defend this policy, while many do agree in private, because of the inevitable backlash from radical students and unions.



Recent Changes in Venezuelan Higher Education

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Few countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced as many drastic changes in higher education as have taken place in Venezuela's system. In less than a decade this system has moved away from the format of the conventional system common throughout the region to a political and ideological approach raising many questions about the academic standards that are supposed to be at the core of the mission of higher education.

POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY

Venezuela is undergoing an accelerated transformation in the political and ideological arena, driving the changes in the country's higher education system. Between 1958 and 1998 this society worked under the standard framework of a democratic process. The key concepts of the system—modernization and development—promoted the growth of a highly successful diversified and pluralistic higher education system that trained the professionals needed by society as well as the ruling political elite. But the system failed in two critical aspects: meeting the growing demand for access to higher education and stopping the malaise caused by administrative and academic corruption so deeply embedded in the system that it still prevails today.

The 1998 elections brought a new government into office. Instead of business as usual, a revolutionary vision came into power, and the society began the transition from capitalism to socialism, from democracy to autocracy.

CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The four stages in the Venezuelan case have transformed this

system in less than a decade. This article analyzes these changes and establishes the prospect for the future of this system. The earlier conventional Venezuelan higher education constituted a typical Latin American system. Both the state and the private sector served as key actors among institutions. Links existed to Europe and the United States. The middle and upper classes held an advantage in terms of access. Standards tended to pass along a continuum with low and high extremes of academic quality, with educational technology oriented toward teaching more than research.

In 2002, the new government came into power and promised to respond to popular needs in higher education, and that meant providing access, which was almost closed to the poor and general public of society. This goal was reached, with access opened no matter what the cost of diminishing academic quality. The trade-off on these matters is rather difficult to solve, given the improbability of combining universal access and increased academic quality.

The government's first higher educational initiative included opening the Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela and expanding the Universidad Nacional Experimental de la Fuerza Armada. At the same time they created alternative programs—such as the *misiones* (missions) educational programs designed to enhance the training of students willing to enter higher education, as well as the *aldeas universitarias* (university villages) to reach rural areas lacking higher education. These programs were subsidized by the government through modest but highly popular scholarship programs, increasing the political support for the government.

The third stage of this higher education policymaking consists of the *motores*—the engines of the rapid changes that are transforming this society in ideological terms. Ideologization

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is now the key element of the system. In keeping with the political landscape, the president's brother has been in charge of this development as minister of education and after three years as ambassador to Havana.

The final stage is the internationalization of the system, creating in Venezuela universities that are Latin American. Thus, instead of the national standard system, the country is preparing to train people from all over the region according to its ideological and revolutionary vision, an approach first begun in Cuba in the late 1960s and now being transferred to Venezuela.

CONTRADICTIONS AND CONFLICTS

These actions have not avoided opposition and conflicts. The vice rectors for academic affairs of all Venezuelan universities